



Seattle Transit Study, ICT Open Houses Summary June 26-28, 2001

The City of Seattle's Strategic Planning Office hosted three open houses from June 26-28, 2001. The purpose of the open houses was to present Phase II project information on the Seattle Transit Study of Intermediate Capacity Transit (ICT) and to receive public comments. Over 100 citizens attended the open houses held at Whittier Elementary in Ballard, Cooper Elementary in West Seattle and the Olympic Room at Seattle Center.

The open houses were publicized in several ways. Display ads ran in the Seattle Press, Seattle Medium, West Seattle Herald, Queen Anne/Magnolia News and Jet City Maven. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer had a listing in its calendar section. An announcement was placed in the June issue of the Department of Neighborhoods newsletter. The West Seattle Junction Association newsletter and the Morgan Community Association newsletter listed the open houses. Over 1,700 postcards were mailed to the project mailing list and distributed at neighborhood service centers, libraries and community centers. The project website also listed open house dates and locations.

Upon arriving attendees were encouraged to sign-in and received a two-page project comment form as well as a newsletter containing a project overview. A series of 30"x 40" display boards was arranged in a loose semi-circle and broken into five "stations" around the room. Each station was staffed with at least one member of the project management team who answered questions and noted citizen comments.

The first station gave a project overview and timeline along with a brief introduction to the technologies being considered for ICT. The second focused on the routes being considered within the two major corridors of:

- Lake City/Northgate/Ballard/Downtown,
- West Seattle/Downtown.

A third station analyzed potential ridership and costs associated with different technologies. The impacts on traffic, parking and environmental concerns were examined in the fourth station.

There were also tables for the Elevated Transportation Company, Sound Transit and City departments to have information available and staff, if necessary.

Citizens gave comments by filling out comment forms (27 received to date), writing notes on flip charts, by talking with project management team members at the meeting and e-mailing staff after the meeting.

For the northern route citizens selected:

- 9 elevated primary route
- 5 elevated secondary route
- 2 elevated primary combined with streetcars
- 2 elevated primary with BRT secondary
- 2 elevated primary, streetcar secondary and BRT secondary,
- 1 streetcar primary
- 1 BRT primary.

For the southern route citizens chose:

12 selected elevated
2 elevated and streetcar
1 BRT and elevated
1 BRT
1 streetcar.

The majority of people making comments supported elevated transit. They said that speed, reliability and increased ridership warrant spending the extra money to build a monorail.

"Ridership estimates impressive for monorail, also like the neighborhood connection times."

"As elevated is a factor of 2 or 3 faster it has the most potential to get people out of their cars."

"If the Goal is more transit riders, then elevated is the way to go."

"The higher initial cost would be overcome by the higher volume of passengers."

Verbatim flip chart comments

Pro Monorail

Why do all this over-analyzing separate from and competing with the monorail (ETC) funding and work? Makes it really hard for citizens to understand.

If the Goal is more transit riders, then elevated is the way to go.

Great to see how many traffic lanes can be retained while adding monorail

Main application of City of Seattle transportation planning and funding should be the monorail.

Monorail cost calculation should reflect long term 1)increase of ridership and 2)decrease in operating costs (e.g. more durable equipment.)

The necessary mode is for regional transit: monorail and link.

Let's go monorail! What a great solution to our problems.

Ridership estimates impressive for monorail, also like the neighborhood connection times.

South Elevate Route should go to the Fauntleroy Ferry. I like the Elevated Routes the most.

It looks like elevated route give quicker service and more volume.

An elevated system has many possible styles and they all free up space for car-bus traffic below.

Regarding cross sections – Elevated dose not need to take that much space out of the road (shown with plant strip). It can be incorporated with parking/sidewalks/parking strips/bike lanes/etc – don't sacrifice traffic lanes!

Keep it off the streets and out of the ground.

In the commercial areas I think having it against the side of the buildings with a skirt underneath for rain /sun protection would be a plus and not interfere with street traffic and sky views.

I like the North elevated route the most!

The higher initial cost would be overcome by the higher volume of passengers.

As elevated is a factor of 2 or 3 faster it has the most potential to get people out of their cars.

Requests for other data

What are the "life cycle" costs of operation? Won't those make Monorail more affordable?

Compare sample travel times to current available modes of transportation over the same route

Please add current in-vehicle travel times to map

Please produce a chart showing the "trip table" (schematic)

What is the frequency of service assumptions on the passenger volumes?

No graphic illustrates service frequency; this is key advantage of all three modes.

Need frequency and stop numbers in order to evaluate travel times chart.

Would love to see cost: miles per segment (daily transit pass volumes) divided by ridership. Example elevated junction to Delridge = 8 miles divided by 8000 vs. Stadia to Spokane Street = 4 miles divided by 22,000

What are the heights of the monorail tracks and BRT wires?

Compare sample travel times to current available modes of transportation over the same route

Would like to see "core system" i.e. to 35th St Avalon with feeder bus routes explored.

Want to see the cross section for elevated and BRT on Morgan Street.

How about a map showing utilities?

On cross-section views, where is the bike lane?

Route Suggestions/Comments

More small circulator/shuttles in neighborhoods

Serving central Ballard should be paramount

Run waterfront streetcar (or other vehicle) North to (through) Ballard and continue South to _?

Need to incorporate Northgate Transit Center in whatever you do

Connect via arterial connection on waterfront

South route (preferably elevated) will allow the truncation of many West Seattle Metro bus routes, and reallocate them to neighborhood shuttles, serving the neighborhood better and better intra-West Seattle service.

My thoughts (above) exactly! Make a real 24 hour transit center with bus/monorail connection, retail space (food, drug store, dry cleaners, restaurant and maybe even a cinema) and parking.

Secondary North elevated route is vastly superior. It connects neighborhoods of Ballard and Fremont – making transit make sense for more than must commuters

One lane through traffic at street or stops? (75th and 15th)

Must serve W. Seattle Jct/most metro bus routes converge there. (all modes).

I live in West Queen Anne and would love it if routes ran frequently enough so I could use it for getting to UW without spending the whole day there. Right now I find that unless I'm going downtown the public transportation system doesn't work for me.

The Queen Anne Plan calls for a mass transit stop in the vicinity of the Key Arena Plaza. First Avenue N. at W. Thomas has been recommended by all Queen Anne organizations. A stop at W. Thomas at Elliott could connect to a Waterfront Trolley Extension stop proposed for W. Thomas St. at Alaskan Way N. See Ethan Melone's preliminary alignment studies for SPO. And the Queen Anne organizations strongly support an east-side additional stop for Seattle Center, perhaps in the vicinity of Fisher Plaza or at the existing monorail station. The idea is to cater to the 9-million visitors per year traveling to/from Seattle Center with two stations. Yes, that seems like three stations which are too close together, but they'll serve Uptown Urban Center and Seattle Center. The Elliott Ave. stop would connect Uptown and Seattle Center to the Ferry Terminal via Waterfront Trolley.

Possibilities of a route that turned off W. Thomas St. into Warren Ave. N. or 2nd Ave. N. to reach the 2nd Ave. corridor leading into Downtown. This alternative could provide a stop near the Pacific Science Center and the Olympic Sculpture Park. The route avoids duplication of the existing Monorail corridor. 2nd N. runs along the southern boundary of the Pacific Science Center Property.

Queen Annans hope that you will be able to provide the ETC with ridership projections that will support a W. Thomas-Elliott Ave.-15th Ave. W. corridor for their proposed elevated service.

BRT related

Like modern design of BRT buses in pictures, low floor good for elderly and handicapped.

Prefer BRT and monorail, not street cars/trams

Conflict with BRT and bikes and driveways

Bus Route

Bad for on-street retail parking in uptown's retail core – along Mercer and Queen Anne/ 1st N. owner operated businesses in this neighborhood shopping area live and die according to on-street parking availability

Streetcar related

South Streetcar alt. via junction looks nice, would there be tunnel capacity problems in the future? (with Sound Transit line)

Like the idea of streetcars; o.k. if it takes some on-street parking.

The tram route connecting Elliott Ave. to Seattle Center via W. Republican St. may not be realistic in terms of the topography. There is a cliff between Elliott Ave. and 4th Ave. W. along the alignment of W. Republican. This showed up in the earlier trolley extension route study. Otherwise, W. Republican is a non-disruptive and well located route through Uptown's business district and through Seattle Center. If you know a way to engineer a connection from Elliott onto W. Republican for a tram- more power to you.

Miscellaneous

Might establishment of ICT services and routes require a significant re-configuration of other street transit services and routes? (particularly between/among neighborhoods and communities north of the ship canal? (e.g. U District, Wallingford, Fremont, Greenwood, etc) Would a "circle(s) and grid service approach help inter connect these communities (drew diagram on second page)

Recommended readings

"The Vanishing Automobile and other Urban Myths" Randal O'toole – Thoreau Inst., Bangdon, OR 2001

"The Tragedy of the Commons" Science 1997?

I live on 36th SW and Henderson in West Seattle. I love the idea or a monorail. However, I am concerned about the impact on my property. For instance: will those on the monorail have a birds-eye view of my back yard? Will my property or an adjacent property be condemned to accommodate the monorail or other route or a station? This makes me nervous.

Please provide a real park n ride at a location intersecting monorail, metro and Sound Transit. Good piece of land by the Huling Bros./ Hancock Fabric.

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Comments from the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) re: removal of on-street parking

The presence of on-street parking usually enhances the pedestrian environment on the adjacent sidewalk. The parked cars and meter posts (if present) separate the pedestrian from passing motor vehicles and bicycles. This creates an appropriate feeling of security for the pedestrian.

Removal of on-street parking reduces pedestrian confidence in the environment of the sidewalk. This pedestrian confidence is extremely important in neighborhood shopping areas. Furthermore, the owner-operated and local businesses located in storefronts facing the sidewalk in neighborhood shopping areas are dependent for parking on the on-street parking slots.

It is important in planning ICT alignments that attention be paid to the very functional on-street parking, especially in neighborhood shopping areas.

SPAB is particularly concerned about the removal of on-street parking that may be caused by the routing of Express Bus service in exclusive bus lanes in neighborhood shopping areas. Street Trams and Elevated ICT alignments can also impact on-street parking. Extra-long Express Bus transit vehicles moving in the lane adjacent to the sidewalk would create a very poor pedestrian environment.

Ways in which this degradation of pedestrian environment could be minimized could include:

- Route ICT along streets that bring transit riders to stations that access neighborhood shopping areas but do not pass in front of many shop fronts.*
- Provide bus stop bulbs and retain on-street parking.*
- Provide wide planting strips and railings to separate ICT vehicles and pedestrians.*

It is important to bring shoppers and workers to our shopping areas by ICT. But it is also important to preserve the economic aspects of these shopping areas that are supported by pedestrians, and automobile parking.

SPAB advises that the conflict between ICT, particularly Express Bus services, and on-street parking be resolved in the planning and implementation of ICT modes in Seattle. This issue should be dealt with in all proposals and study documents related to ICT.

Verbatim Comments from Comment Form

Based on the information presented today , which route(s) or combination of routes so you prefer? Why?

N= Elevated primary

S= Elevated

Elevated – fastest service, most riders.

Elevated secondary

Elevated

Monorail makes sense people want to save time. Many more people would be willing to ride the monorail. It makes no sense to clog up the streets and cause more congestion.

Tram/streetcar

none selected

Move people.

Selected elevated and street cars

selected elevated and street cars

Get vehicles off the street.

Selected elevated and BRT secondary

none selected

Prefer adding transit system that does not run on streets. Go monorail!

BRT primary

BRT

Elevated primary

Elevated

The monorail concept would provide the most expeditious, efficient, and least environmentally impact. Noise, soil disturbance, air qualities, water quality, ESA issues, etc. Would be impacted the least by the monorail concept.

Elevated primary

none selected

I'm impressed that ETC routing according to your charts, permits present volume to continue and also has much higher ridership.

Elevated primary & BRT secondary

Elevated

Separated from heavy traffic and traffic lights is very important.

Elevated primary

none selected

Speed.

none selected

BRT

Elevated too expensive, ridership/mile question.

Elevated primary

Elevated

Higher capacity, faster.

Elevated primary

Elevated

Elevated monorail makes so much more sense! It would be time reliable, not in traffic not blacking traffic, can be built using much existing right of way.

Elevated secondary BRT and elevated
North = Fremont is more a destination place, vs. Interbay (pass through destination)

Elevated secondary Elevated
Elevated solution serves neighborhoods most effectively. Time factors are impressive! Would like to see service to Lake Union, Fremont, Ballard, Northgate.

Elevated secondary
Fremont and Ballard are essential destinations.

Elevated secondary Elevated
North should serve Fremont and Old Ballard – not 15th. This makes it more relevant for connecting neighborhood destinations (restaurants, night life and community, not just commuting).

Elevated primary, street car secondary Elevated primary, street car sec'd.
The elevated monorail is the best system. Because it is above ground, it has a
dedicated right of way without interference from vehicle traffic, stop lights etc. To
get people out of cars, the stem must be quick and frequent and have capacity
to serve rush-hour demand.

Elevated primary	Elevated
Quicker, less impact to streets	

BRT secondary & Elevated primary none selected

Elev. Prim, Streetcar sec, BRT sec	Streetcar
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Elevated primary Elevated
Speed, minimal interference with auto traffic, no need for expensive tunnel.

none selected none selected

Elevated primary	Elevated
Least disruption of on ground alternative.	Fewer stops = faster trips to downtown.

Elevated primary Elevated
The north primary route can connect with Key Arena, extend waterfront streetcar which connects to ferries, and south interbay/Immunex where development is about to explode.

Elevated primary	Elevated
Carries the most people.	

Elevate prim, Streetcar sec, BRT sec Elevated
The Elevated system would be quicker to serve between Lake City and West Seattle, where as the Streetcar system would were on the secondary route.

Do you have any changes or addition to any of the routes?

Serve Central Ballard, if possible

Definitely should include Ballard/Fremont/Q.A. or S. Lake Union

Continue waterfront street car (or other device) north to Ballard (and beyond), and south to _? Bike lanes on the cross-sectional street views- where are they?

No

Need shuttle service from western and eastern section of Ballard to monorail station(s) on 15th.

More stations.

Not at this time

Make sure the Ballard route gets to SNCC at Northgate!! Ridership will be significantly higher if there are “destination” that attract ridership at night and on weekends – Don’t end in a commuter parking lot far from shopping area at Greenwood and 145h, no one will use it after 7 pm.

Can’t the route utilize Northgate Way instead of looping south below the Mall? (I know that’s where the Transit Center is, but its down in the corner of the Urban Center and thus focusing transit on it will not greatly help catalyze any desired transformation of the Northgate area. We should encourage office complexes along Northgate Way.

Concerned about BRT up and down Morgan – very (compared to Holden etc) narrow street. Do not eliminate on street parking there!

West Seattle to U District, West Seattle to Capitol Hill. Let’s go! Just do it!

North secondary elevated route needs to serve Seattle Center. Eliminate routes that bypass West Seattle Junction proper. Eliminate South street car in first ave. Will get stuck in stadia traffic and Pioneer Square will have to give up valuable parking spaces.

Let’s build one adequate park n ride in West Seattle to service Metro, Sound Transit and Monorail.

Turn the original monorail “X” into an “8”. The utility of the system would be increased dramatically with a relatively short addition of rail.

North on California from Alaska to Admiral.

Generally , look good. Would like to see secondary route to Greenlake area.

Could we please have some East-West service?

Fremont access. Don’t conflict with monorail – use monorail instead of “light rail.

No

What route(s) best serves your travel needs?

Hard to say – not my usual routes.

Mainly Ballard to downtown but would use to go to Northgate and West Seattle occasionally.

A primary along 15th to Downtown.

Ballard down 15th into downtown Seattle.

Northgate to SeaTac – I never need my car when I board a plane.

Secondary Elevation would serve me best to downtown from North Ballard. However, the issues with the secondary route would not be the best between the tow routes from a socio-economic or environmental perspective.

Northgate to Belltown to Downtown and stadiums.

Ballard/15th Ave. NW

Morgan Junction into downtown.

35th Avenue Corridor.

Not applicable.

South of Downtown elevated.

West Seattle to Downtown.

West Seattle Junction to Downtown.

Elevated South.

Capital Hill resident. Probably BRT but not in support.

Ballard-Queen Anne- Downtown, Ballard-U District –Northgate.

15th NW to downtown extension to Fauntleroy ferry would be nice.

Primary elevated.

North Secondary or U-District to Capital Hill to Central District.

North of Downtown, form Northgate

What route(s) best improves overall transit service in Seattle

North primary elevated looks slightly better, that secondary should serve lower Queen Anne.

The two elevated routes chosen are the best to start with.

Ballard – Downtown

Monorail/elevated.

Monorail does take away any lanes currently being used.

Either 15th NW or Aurora, would be improvement but I think 15th has much more to gain in performance times.

BRT

Secondary North elevated – primary South. South line allows truncation of many West Seattle metro bus routes.

No answer. Build light rail up the freeway! Build monorail in place of current light rail path.

Elevated South and North

Probably U-District- Downtown- Sports Statia

Reductions in single occupant cars between Northgate & downtown would be great.

Elevated.

The Primary route form Lake City to West Seattle using the elevated system and the streetcar being used on the secondary route.

Technology (which do you prefer and why)

Elevated

Fastest service

Elevated

I appreciate the comparison but we really should concentrate on taking people out of their cars and cars off the roadways. I know many more people will take the monorail if they can get there much quicker than driving or bus.

Streetcar/Tram

I've experienced streetcars working in Europe.

Combination elevated and streetcar

Reduce hydrocarbons and possibly street noise.

Elevated

Monorail best. Prefer buses over trams because of flexibility of changing bus routes (no tram tacks, which can't be easily moved)

BRT

Elevated

Fast.

Elevated

Same reasons as above.

Elevated

Fastest service and permits high traffic flow.

Elevated

Most important to me is speed of service. It currently takes longer at rush hour from downtown (3rd + Madison) to Crown Hill than from downtown to Lynnwood! After rush hour, it would be great to have fast service that doesn't wend its way over lower Queen Anne. That is a huge diversion for people going to Ballard.

Combination BRT and Elevated

Elevated to West Seattle and then busses to /between villages.

Elevated

Speed.

Elevated

It's out of traffic stupid! We have gridlock. It took me 60 minutes this am for my commute from West Seattle to U. District. I can't afford to be late to work!!

Elevated

Too much congestion on surface. Eliminate Street car/tram (BRT has compatible ridership at less cost).

Elevated

See previous answer. Seattle needs this solution as a piece of the transportation puzzle.

Elevated

Speed and frequency. Without sacrificing road space or parking. Cars aren't going to disappear. Hopefully they will begin to gather more dust.

Elevated

Elevated is fast, and doesn't stop for light or traffic. It impacts parking and loss of lane much less. It has to be faster than driving to reach out to people who aren't already transit users, which it must! The other options take lanes of traffic yet are not a great improvement...therefore making traffic worse!

Elevated

Monorail has the best future. The other will reach a point of diminishing returns sooner. Too often we've gone for cheap solution only to find new needs cropping up before long. Monorail will coast more to build, but will serve longest and best. Buses and Streetcars are only temporary solutions.

Elevated

Cheaper/easier to put up, safer, quieter. Good for tourism- people will ride it to see the area. "Rise above it all" Marina E. Wiesenbach 260.583.8190 Better above traffic, not dealing with cars and pedestrians.

Combination BRT and Elevated

Faster, safer. Why not grade separate BRT?

Elevated

Reliability, views, least street disruption.

Elevated

Surface is already full.

Elevated

Elevated

Streetcar/Tram

Streetcars/trams bring a lot of character to a city/town. I am very biased toward rail transport.

General Comments

Instead of failed (merry-go-round) leadership (like the light-rail program) of high-priced, low-commitment, low-results executives, hire someone from a system that works, such as Budapest or Prague. They have had over 100 years to get the great integrated systems they have, but they had to start somewhere, so do we.

Let's actually get some alternate transit as soon as possible.

Sound Transit come across as not being able to shoot straight. Hire General Lafayette to take charge as someone who knows systems as in Paris or London. After it is started we can complain and send him back home. Create the “map” of the whole system and plaster it everywhere so the average person can use the system for free. Integrate the various ferries, trains, greyhounds into hubs so as you step off on you can get to the next one. To raise funds, tax the cars on a daily basis if they insist on driving downtown to work with only a brief case.

Add another corridor: Seattle Center to/from NW.

Vital Connections: East of Seattle Center, Key arena (west), stadiums, extended waterfront trolley

ETC should emphasize “elevated” over monorail. Let costs or aesthetics determine the vehicle after a route is chosen.

The following basic guidelines were gleaned from the Seattle Transit Study open house of 27th June 2001: Motivation – Traffic control, Reduction of global warming affects, conservation of natural resources. Transit strategy – fuel efficiency, environmental impacts, direct linear tracts, ground stability, earthquake proofability, level terrain , safety, reliability/longevity of project, Boeing access, neighborhood development affects, unobstructed wind paths. Transportation regulations – one car per household, private vehicles restrict to cargo transfer, special needs.

Impacts

Citizens ranked the following as the top three impacts.

Maintaining or improving traffic flow

Attractiveness /convenience to transit riders (speed/reliability)

Creating or maintaining an attractive pedestrian environment